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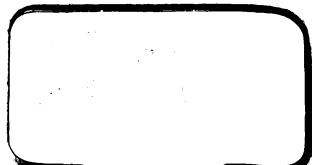
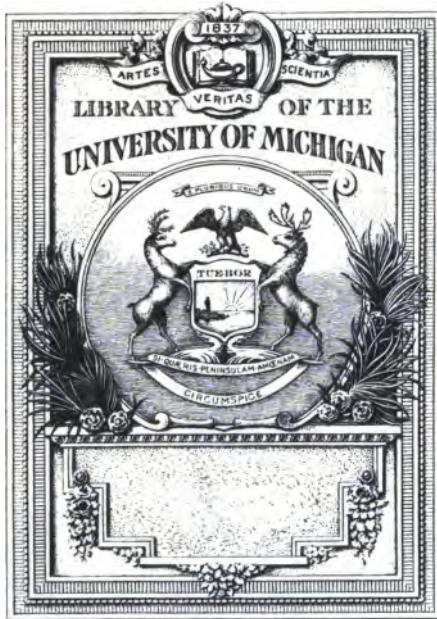
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R. Forelly
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ANNA
Anglie Scotie
Hibernie
Fidei



D. Gratia
Franciae et
Regina,—
Defensor &c.—

Woodward, Joseph

A N

155

ACCOUNT
OF THE
PROGRESS
OF THE
Reformation of Manners,
IN
England, Scotland, and Ireland,
And other Parts of *Europe and America.*

With some Reasons and plain Directions for our hearty
and vigorous Prosecution of this Glorious Work.

In a Letter to a Friend.

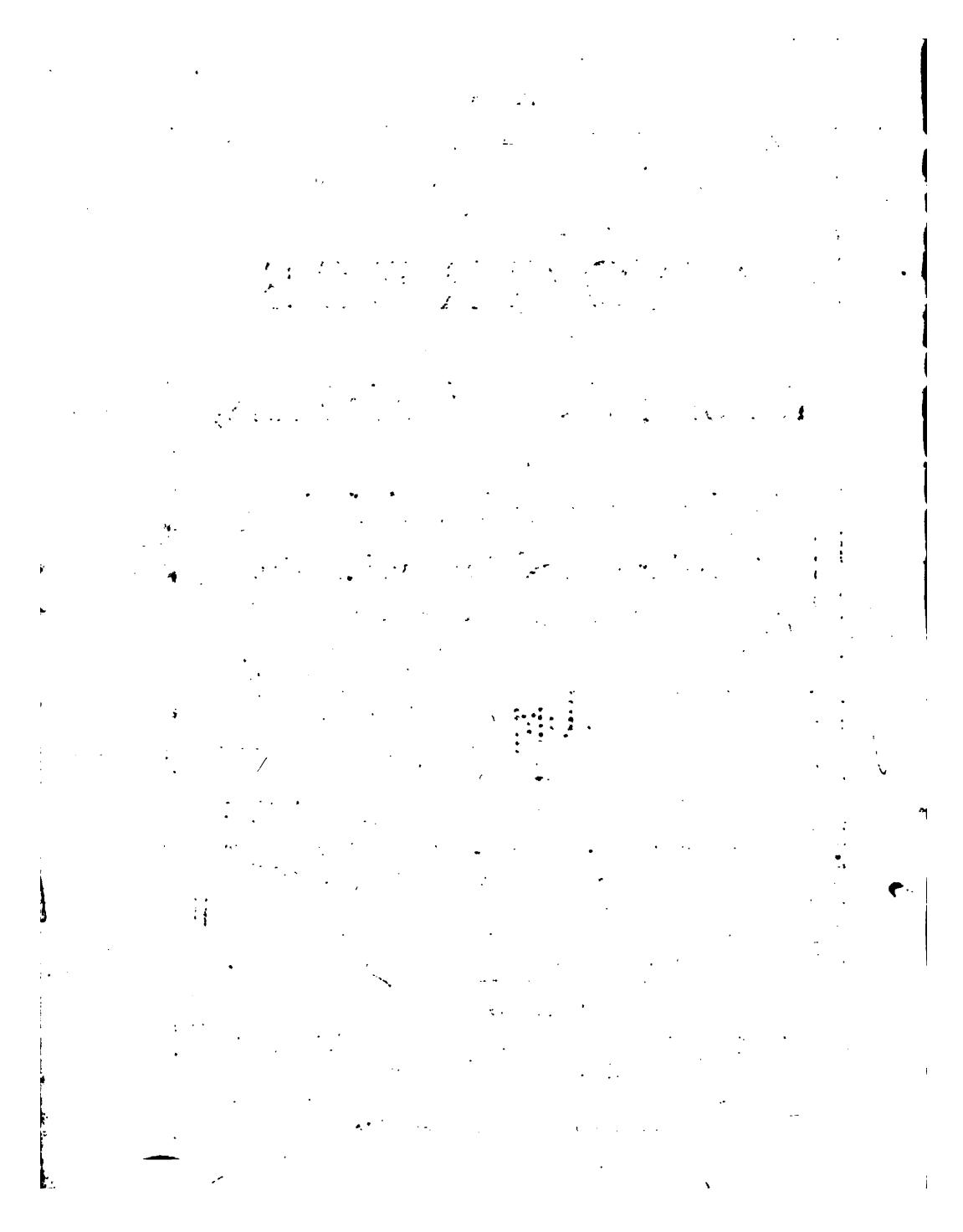
To which is added,

The Special Obligations of MAGISTRATES,
to be diligent in the Execution of the *Penal-Laws*
against *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*, for the Effect-
ing of a National Reformation.

The Twelfth Edition with considerable Additions.

L O N D O N ,

Printed and Sold by *Joseph Downing* in *Bartholomew-Close*
near *West-Smithfield*, 1704.



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By the QUEEN,
A PROCLAMATION,
For the Encouragement of
PIETY and VIRTUE,
And for the Preventing and Punishing of
Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality.

ANNE R.



HER EAS on Our Accession to the Throne, We thought fit, by the Advice of Our Privy Council, to Issue out Our Royal Proclamation, for the Encouragement of *Piety and Virtue*, and for the Preventing and Punishing of *Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality*: And whereas We have been informed, That Our Laws mentioned in the said *Proclamation* have not been executed according to Our Just Expectation and Commands; We most seriously and religiously considering, That it is an indispensable Duty on Us, to be careful, above all other things, to preserve and advance the Honour and Service of Almighty God, and to discourage and suppress all *Vice, Prophaneness, Debauchery,*

By the QUEEN,

ry, and *Immorality*, which are so highly displeasing to God, so great a Reproach to Our Religion and Government, and (by means of the frequent ill Examples of the Practicers thereof) have so fatal a Tendency to the Corruption of many of Our Loving Subjects, otherwise Religiously and Virtuously disposed, and which, (if not timely remedied) may justly draw down the Divine Vengeance on Us and Our Kingdoms : We also humbly acknowledging, That We cannot expect the Blessing and Goodness of Almighty God (by whom Kings and Queens Reign) and on which We entirely rely) to make Our Reign happy and prosperous to Our Self and Our People, nor hope for the Divine Assistance to deliver Us from the great and imminent Dangers which Our Kingdoms and the true Protestant Religion Established among Us, are in this present Juncture threatened with, without a Religious Observance of God's Holy Laws : To the Intent therefore, that Religion, Piety, and good Manners may (according to Our most hearty Desire) flourish and increase under Our Administration and Government, We have thought fit (by the Advice of Our Privy Council) to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby declare Our Royal Purpose and Resolution to discountenance and punish all manner of *Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality*, in all Persons of whatsoever Degree or Quality, within this Our Realm, and particularly in such as are employed near Our Royal Person ; and that for the greater Encouragement of Religion and Morality, We will, upon all Occasions, distinguish Persons of Piety and Virtue, by Marks of Our Royal Favour. And we do expect and require, that all Persons of Honour, or in place of Authority, will give good Example by their own Virtue and Piety, and to their utmost, contribute to the discountenancing Persons of dissolute and debauched Lives, that they being by that means reduced to Shame and Contempt, for their loose and evil Actions and Behaviour, may be thereby also enforced the sooner to reform their ill Habits and Practices, and that the visible Displeasure of good Men towards them, may as far as it is possible) supply what the Laws (probably) cannot altogether prevent. And We do hereby strictly enjoin and prohibit all Our Loving Subjects, of what Degree or Quality so ever, from Playing on the Lord's-Day at Dice, Cards, or any other

A Proclamation.

other Game whatsoever, either in Publick or Private Houses, or other Place or Places whatsoever ; and do hereby require and command them, and every of them, decently and reverently to attend the Worship of God on every Lord's-Day, on Pain of Our highest Displeasure, and of being proceeded against with the utmost Rigour that may be by Law. And for the more effectual Reforming of all such Persons, who, by reason of their dissolute Lives and Conversations, are a Scandal to Our Kingdom, Our further Pleasure is, and We do hereby strictly Charge and Command all Our Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, and all other Our Officers, and Ministers, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, and all other our Subjects whom it may concern, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery, and the effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be guilty of excessive *Drinking, Blasphemy, Prophane Swearing* and *Cursing, Lewdness, Prophanation of the Lord's-Day*, or other Dissolute, Immoral, or Disorderly Practices ; and that they take Care also effectually to suppress all Bawdy-Houses, Publick Gaming Houses and Places, and other Disorderly Houses, and to put in Execution the Statute made in the Nine and Twentieth Year of the Reign of Our late Royal Uncle King Charles the Second, Intituled, *An Act for the better Observation of the Lord's-Day, commonly called Sunday* ; and also an Act of Parliament made in the Ninth Year of the Reign of Our late dear Brother King William the Third, Intituled, *An Act for the more effectual Suppressing of Blasphemy and Prophaneness* ; and all other Laws now in Force for the Punishing and Suppressing any of the Vices aforesaid ; and also to suppress and prevent all Gaming whatsoever in Publick or Private Houses on the *Lord's-Day*, and likewise that they take effectual Care to prevent all Persons keeping Taverns, Chocolate-Houses, Coffee Houses, or other Publick Houses whatsoever, from selling Wine, Chocolate, Coffee, Ale, Beer, or other Liquors, or Receiving or Permitting Guests to be or remain in such their Houses on the Lord's-Day, (except in case of Necessity and Charity) as they will answer it to Almighty God, and upon Pain of Our highest Displeasure. And for the more effectual proceeding herein, We do hereby direct and command all Our Judges of Assize and Justices of the Peace, to give strict Charges at their respective Assizes

By the QUEEN, &c.

Assizes and Sessions, for the due Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons that shall presume to offend in any of the kinds aforesaid, and also of all Persons that, contrary to their Duty, shall be remiss or negligent in putting the said Laws in Execution; and that they do at their respective Assizes and Quarter-Sessions of the Peace, cause this Our *Proclamation* to be publickly read in open Court, immediately before the Charge is given. And We do hereby further charge and command every Minister in his respective Parish-Church or Chappel, to read or cause to be read this Our *Proclamation*, at least Four times in every Year, immediately after Divine Service, and to incite and stir up their respective Auditories to the Practice of Piety and Virtue, and avoiding of all Immorality and Prophaneness. And to the End that all Vice and Debauchery may be prevented, and Religion and Virtue practised by all Officers, private-Soldiers, Mariners, and others, who are employed in Our Service, by Sea or Land, We do hereby strictly charge and command all Our Commanders and Officers whatsoever, that they do take Care to avoid all Prophaneness, Debauchery, and other Immoralities; and that by their own good and virtuous Lives and Conversations, they do set good Examples to all such as are under their Care and Authority, and likewise take Care of and inspect the Behaviour of all such as are under them, and to punish all those who shall be guilty of any the Offences aforesaid, as they will be answerable for the ill Consequences of their Neglect herein.

*Given at Our Court at St. James's the Fifth and Twentieth Day
of February, 1702. In the First Year of Our Reign.*

GOD Save the QUEEN.

A N

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A N

AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
PROGRESS
OF THE
Reformation of Manners, &c.

SIR,

I Suppose that you have heard of the Attempts that have been made for the Promoting of a Reformation of Manners, by the Execution of the Penal-Laws against Prophaneness and Debauchery, begun by some few Persons of the Church of England, and most of them private Men: That these Endeavours have had a very great Success, (particularly for the Suppressing of Prophane Swearing and Cursing, Drunkenness, and Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, and the giving a Check to the Open Lewdness that was acted in many of our Streets) and have been publickly and solemnly Approved by a considerable Number of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Honourable Judges of the Kingdoms of England and Ireland; and have been countenanced occasionally, and in another manner, by most of the other of our Right

Reverend

SWE

Reverend Bishops, in their *Circular Letters*, printed 1699. (of which I shall take some farther notice.) But you may not be acquainted, That His late Majesty having this Affair laid before him by one of his Chief Ministers of State, promised the Societies not only his Protection, but Countenance: And that our present Illustrious Q U E E N, since the issuing out of Her *Proclamations* against Vice and Prophaneness, hath been graciously pleased to signifie Her Approbation of this Work: That these Endeavours are carrying on in most Parts of this Kingdom; and in many of those of Iceland, as I could enumerate to you if twere necessary, and have been applauded and recommended in a publick manner, as fit to be imitated by other Christian States, by the Commissioners of several French Churches, who were appointed to take this Affair into their Consideration; and have been lately very solemnly Approved by divers of the Nobility, and by the Commissioners of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where this Work is now so far advanced, that besides the Societies for Reformation lately set up in other Parts of that Kingdom, there were (we are informed) some Months since, Thirteen of these Societies in the City of Edinburgh alone; in which City, the Magistrates have, upon this Occasion, lately erected a new Court against Immorality; and that 'tis to be hop'd, that, with God's Blessing, a great part of the Christian World will be influenced hereby; the Account of these Societies being already Translated into the French and High-Dutch Languages, and hath been some time since Translating into the Latin by several Hands, for the propagating the same Glorious Design in other Nations; by which means a great part of the World will be soon acquainted with this Undertaking, and the Success of it, and, it may reasonably be expected, will be excited to an Imitation:

And

And this may the rather be hop'd, since the restraining of Men from publick Vices, and open Violations of Religion, hath, I think, ever been thought the great Interest and Busyness of Government, is what the Laws of civilized Nations, tho' they may be more or less severe in different Countries, provide against, *Papists* and *Protestants*, *Jews* and *Mahometans*, agree in; and since moreover so many learned and pious Persons, in divers parts of *Europe* and *America*, are already successfully engaged in Promoting of this Work by Societies, after the Example of *England*.

'Tis certain that a Reverend Divine, who hath been lately in our Northern Plantations in *America*, by the Encouragement of divers of our Bishops, for the Propagating Christianity there, ordered a whole Impression of the *Account of the Societies* to be printed off, and sent thither, for the promoting a *Reformation*, by these Methods, in those Parts of the World. And this Reverend Person, the last Month told me, that he thinks they have since made a more remarkable *Reformation* there, than is in either of Her Majesty's Kingdoms.

From *New-England* we are told, That great Care hath been there taken of late for the Punishment of *Vice* and *Profaneness* by the Methods that are here used; and a Gentleman of that Country, in his Letter bearing date *April 10. 1702.* informs us, That several Societies are formed in *Boston*, and he thinks that in a little time he shall acquaint us of others set up in other parts of that Country.

From the Island of *Jamaica*, Dr. *Tod*, Rector of St. *Thomas in the Vale*, tells us, That at a general Meeting of the Clergy of that Island at St. *Fago de la Vaga*,

(10)

Novemb. 27. 1700. by the appointment of their Commissary, the Clergy, in conjunction with divers of the Gentlemen of that Country, had formed themselves into a Society for Reformation of Manners, and the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; and that the Governour of that Island had under his Hand Signed his full Approbation of it, and their Orders.

"Tis affirmed by a Person of Integrity, who is come over from *Flanders*, that they have very much suppressed the *Disorderly Houses* in *Brussels*, (the *Popish Priests* in that City having gone about to the *Publick Houses*, exhorting them to leave off their Irregularities) as he assures me they have wholly done the *Musick-Houses*, which were generally *Houles* of ill Fame, in *Amsterdam* in *Holland*; from whence Monsieur *Bonage* has wrote to a Person in *Ireland*, to be informed what Progress Religion hath made in that Kingdom since *Societies* have been set up in it, being, it seems, desirous, as this Gentleman informs me, to engage himself in this Work in *Holland*.

By a Letter from *Switzerland*, dated in Octob. 1700. we were acquainted, That an Account of our Societies was translated into the *High-Dutch* Language; and that they were making some Progress in this Undertaking.

And from *Schafhausen* twas wrote, Jan. 12. 1700. That they rejoiced to hear of our Zeal in *England*, from an Account of our Societies, which was there translated; and that they had Examples of the same sort of Societies.

From *Germany* we have the following Account from Dr. *Frank*, Divinity Professor in the City of *Hall* in *Saxony*, Jan. 21. 1700. who writes thus to some Persons

sons in this Place : The eminent Success of your Undertakings hath been made known in Germany, by the Reverend Dr. Jablonski, Chaplain to the newly Crowned King of Prussia, who hath translated the Account of the Societies out of English into the German Language. Nor hath this Gentleman's Labours in it proved unsuccessful : For besides the Good it hath done to the Souls of many particular Persons, who have been awakened thereby to a greater Concern for their Spiritual Edification, it hath had a particular good Effect at Norenburg, in that it hath mightily put forward and encouraged a Society, consisting of a great Number of Citizens, who had some time before began to meet at each others Houses upon a Religious Account, and from a sincere Desire of the Truth ; as a very worthy Person hath, by the Request of them all, acquainted me, &c.

From Rotterdam, the famous Monsieur Juriel hearing of these Societies, takes notice, in a transporting manner, in a Letter to a Divine in London, That amidst the many Societies that were in the World about the Concerns of Gold and Silver, and for bringing the Wealth of the Indies into other Countries, he had at last heard a most reviving Account of pious Persons united in very successful Methods for the Extirpation of Vice and Prophaneness, and the bringing down of the Riches of Heaven ; for which he praises God, and conceives great Hopes from hence, that those happy Days may ensue to the Christian World which holy Souls so ardently desire and long for.

Monsieur Oßervald (the learned Author of that excellent Book, intitled, *A Treatise concerning the Causes of the present Corruption of Christians, and the Remedies thereof*) tells us, in a Letter dated April the 6th, 1701. from the Principality of Neuf-Castle, That he had printed off

there an *Account of our Societies*; and that since that was done, the *Pious Designs* formed in *England* were there approved, &c. And April the 11th 1701. he again says, That their Consistory being last Week assembled, resolved to buy up some hundreds of the printed Copies of the *Account of the Societies*; and that they were sent to all the Consistories of that State, in order to dispose them to a *Reformation of Manners*, and to the setting up of Schools; and that the Magistrates of *Neuf-Castle* were addressed to by them for Orders and Laws against *Vice and Immorality*, which they had already obtained.

A Gentleman at *St. Galle*, in his Letter bearing date the 19th of May 1701. writes to his Friend in *England*, That the setting up of *Societies* was recommended to a large Synod of Divines, at their late Meeting at *Zurich*, as the best Expedient for the engaging Men to a Religious course of Life: That the *Account of our Religious Societies*, which was translated and printed at *Zurich*, was much enquired after: That Orders had been given from other *Protestant Cantons*, for the buying up some Numbers of them: That Monsieur Sckerer had put into the German Language the *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners*, which was there in the Press, and he hoped would be printed off in a few Days; that 'twas intended to be Dedicated to the States; and that Care was taken to make it known all over *Germany*. In which Country the Pious Doctor *Crammer*, this Gentleman says, expresses a great Zeal to set forward this Work in his University.

Monsieur de Moos writes from *Malans*, in the Country of the *Grisons*, Sept. 22. 1701. That at an Assembly of Divines that met at *Frib* in that Country the second of that

that Month, a very Advantageous Account of our Designs of *Reformation* had been given them; that they would be laid before their Synod when they met; and that they designed to appoint a Person of Learning and Piety to begin and continue a Correspondence with one of our Societies in *England*.

And from the same Country the celebrated Lady, Madam *Hortensia de Salis*, whom you find honourably mentioned in the Bishop of *Salisbury's* printed Letters of *Switzerland*, in her Letter dated at *Cleft* the tenth of *March 1702.* thus writes: *I cannot sufficiently declare, how great a Veneration is had for the Church of England, the King, and the Illustrious Society, in this Country, by all, in particular by the Clergy. They are every where prayed for, and remembred, as in our Hearts, so in all our Pulpits also. I trust in God (says she) that as he had always his Moses's, Lots, and Samuels, that with-held his Wrath, &c. So he will now, in our Days, raise up many sincere Christians, who, by the Example of the Church of England, and of the Illustrious Society, will be encouraged to promote the Good, and punish the Bad, according to the Laws and Customs of every Country.*

An Envoy Extraordinary from one of the greatest Princes of Europe, to the *Swiss Cantons*, writes in these Terms to an English Gentleman, in a Letter dated at *BERN, Septemb. 10. 1701.* *I have discours'd with the principal Persons of this Church and State, and all of them bless God for the Success wherewith he has Crowned the Zeal of your Holy and Religious Society, and are all of them inclined to enter into a Correspondence, &c.*

A Person of great Reputation in *Switzerland* acquaints us, *Sept. 18. 1701.* That Monsieur *Anfillen*, who hath a Com-

a Commission to the Protestant Cantons from the King of Denmark, has by Letterts to his Correspondents recommended this Work at Berlin; and that a Proposal was there made for Translating the *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners*, into the Danish and Sweedish Languages; and that a Design was there laid of setting up and carrying on of Societies in Denmark and Sweeden, by means of these Translations. He goes on thus in the same Letter: *The Societies in England are in such Esteem in those Parts, that on the sixth of November, 1701. (their general appointed Fast-Day,) they publickly prayed for the Preservation of them in all the Protestant Churches in that Country.* I hope there is no Englishman that hath the least Sparks of Love to his Native Country, but will have in Honour these incomparable Societies: If there are any People so impudent, as to speak disrespectfully of them, let them look to it, that it doth not one time or other fare with them, as now goes with--(an Adversary of the Societies he means) at Zurich, who, I am told, is so ashamed of his having opposed us, since all honest Men are on our side, that he is resolved to leave his Native Country, and go with his Family into some Foreign Parts. These unparalleld Societies in England are not only to be regarded for the Honour they bring to their most happy Nation, but far more for the unspeakable Good that they cause to the Church of Christ both at home and abroad, and annunciate a more illustrious state of the Church of God that is expected by the Conversion of Jews and Gentiles. These are his Words, and he adds further these following: Thus, dear Sir, we now find that all the Helvetick and Rhetick Churches are entirely disposed to propagate Christian Knowledge, punish Vice, and promote true Piety, as the Honourable Society invite them to.

Monsieur

Monsieur Brink, Chaplain to the King of Denmark, wrote, March 2. 1701, to a Reverend Divine in this Kingdom, to send him the Books relating to *Reformation* here, in order to his setting forward the same Design in that Kingdom; which was accordingly done; whose Endeavours therein, we have reason given us to hope, are by this time advantageously assisted by several publick Ministers at that Court: And we understand, that there hath been some Months past transmitted into *Sweeden*, and several other Countries, the Books of *Reformation*, for the promoting of the Design of them likewise in those Countries.

Mr. Peter Zeller, a very eminent Minister in *Zurich* in *Switzerland*, in a Letter of his, dated Feb. 6. 1703. does in very affectionate Terms express their common Esteem of the pious Societies here, and their Expectations of great Advantages to *England*, and to the Church of Christ from them. And having mentioned the frequent Earthquakes in and about *Rome*, which he thinks may be Tokens of God's Displeasure to those Places. He adds his Opinion, that he thinks God is pleased to vouchsafe to our Nation the happy Presages of prosperous Times, in the Rise and Success of those Societies, by whose means Religion and Virtue is very much advanced both in our own and other Nations.

Monsieur Scherer, in a Letter of his from *Sangall*, of Jan. 26. 1703. assures us of the reviving of Piety among them, by the report of what is done here by our Societies, which are concerned in Religious Affairs.

And lastly, A Gentleman of great Character at *Berlin*, in a Letter dated Feb. 23. 1703. acquaints us, That there

there were printed in that City Two Thousand of our little Discourses, that have been dispersed in *England* in great Numbers by the Members of our Societies, which are Translated into other Languages : That the *Soldier's Monitor*, written by Dr. *Woodward*, was (to use the Gentleman's own Words) distributed among the Soldiers in their Garrison by the General's Order ; that the King of *Prussia* being presented with it by one of his Bishops, and having read and approved it, (as did likewise his Privy Council,) has already given, or will soon give Orders to have a considerable Number of them printed for the Benefit of his Soldiers ; that some of them were given to the Prince of *Gotha*, who went from hence the other Day to the King of *Sweden*, to whom he promised to give an Example ; and at the same time he was well assured, that his Majesty would be so well pleased with it, that he would give Orders to have his Army supplyed with the same, and more especially, since there was bound with it, the Discourse against *Swearing* ; for which Vice in particular his *Swedish* Majesty has a great Aversion. The *Soldier's Monitor*, to which is added, the Discourse against *Swearing*, he says, is likewise translated into the *Muscovite* Language, and is designed to be recommended to the Emperour, to his *Czarish* Majesty, and likewise to the Queen of *Poland* (to whom he gives the Epithets of *Pious* and *Virtuous*) who would be apply'd to, to disperse it throughout the *Saxon* Army, &c.

I could have mentioned another Kingdom wherein our Endeavours of *Reformation of Manners* seem to have had a very great Influence : But this I forbear, upon some Considerations at present ; and the rather, since the Particulars I have given you are, I conceive, not only sufficient to convince you fully, that the Success of our Methods of *Reformation here*, have given Occasion to Persons

Sons of the Nations beforementioned, to whom an Account of our Proceedings herein have reached, to set about the same Work; and that it will influence more of those Nations that are remote when it is known to them, by the Translations of the *Account of the Societies* into the more general Languages (that are already perfected, or are, we hear, carrying on) but may moreover give you occasion to think, that the Providence of Almighty God hath, in a particular manner, favoured this Design, especially when you consider, how, and by what means it was begun, and hath been carried on; and that by his Blessing it will prevail over the Opposition made to it from either its publick or private Enemies.

And now, *Sir*, give me leave to say, Can it become any that would be reckoned Christians, that have this great Affair laid before them, to be unconcerned whether these Attempts which have been so successful for the beating down of *Prophaneness* and *Vice*, which have so spread in the World, be carried on not only in these Three Kingdoms, and in our Neighbouring Nations, but through the Christian World; whether the Cause of Religion or the Devil's Interest prevails, to stand Neuter at a time when their Fellow Christians are successfully engaged in the Defence of our Religion against its Enemies, in their bold Attacques upon it; and frequently with the Hazard of their Lives; as lately at *May-Fair*, where some brave Souls were wounded, and one Constable was barbarously murder'd, in the Sight of the Sun, and almost in the Face of the Court, by a Company of Soldiers, who, to the Number of above *Thirty*, as is deposed upon Oath, fell upon the Civil Officers, and their Assistants, with their Swords in their Hands, and Oaths and Execrations in their Mouths, without any Provocation, whilst the Constables, with those that assisted them, were endeavouring to prevent the abominable

nable Disorders that were there committed, in Obedience to the Commands of Her Majesty, and by immediate Direction from the Justices of the Peace of that County.

But, Sir, to speak with a little more freedom to you, Can you think it either justifiable or honourable for one under your Character to satisfy your self with talking gravely and judiciously against the Impieties of the Age, with speaking kindly of those that are concerned in the Suppressing of them ; or even with acting so faintly in this matter, as to discourage any that may be concerned with you in it from the Prosecution of it ; and to speak plainly, to contribute, by your Neutrality or Lukewarmness, to the giving of Boldness and Strength to the Opposers of this Undertaking, and in consequence, I doubt, to the shedding of the Blood, and to the utter Ruine of some of the best Subjects to the Government, if not some of the best Christians in the Nation, who, I am told, are so far from being discouraged (the heartiest of them I mean) by the Opposition and Sufferings they met with from the Enemies of *Reformation*, (who have a fresh Occasion given them to consider, of whom the Blood that is already shed, and that which may be spilt in the Work of *Reformation*, may be required) that they seem to be animated thereby with greater Zeal for their God, as the Martyrs of old were by the Death of their Fellow-Christians. No, surely this is a time for all that carry the Face of Christians, to exert the utmost of their Interest and Authority, to join their Heads, Hearts, Hands, and Purse, in this Noble Undertaking.

This therefore is what I most earnestly recommend to you, that you would be of the happy Number of those that give their hearty and zealous Assistance in this pious Enter-

Enterprize, wherein the Honour of Almighty God and the Good of the World seem to be so much concerned, and thereby become a Benefactor to Mankind. And that you may not be discouraged from Engaging in it for want of Direction how to promote it, I have herewich sent you such Miterials as may enable you to set about it with great Advantage after you have humbly supplicated the Divine Direction and Aid in so weighty an Affair; and which will, I conceive, leave you with less Excuse, if you do not in some measure what you shall conclude, upon your most solemn Deliberation upon this Proposal, it behoves you to do therein.

You have, Sir, first of all, in the *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland*, which I have sent you, a Narrative of the Beginning and Success of the *Endeavours of Reformation*, and a general Scheme of the *Undertaking*, with a Perswasive to Men of all Ranks and Denominations; and a particular Address to *Ministers and Magistrates*, who have their special Obligations laid before them to be zealous in it: To which are added, His Majesty's *Proclamation against Prophaneness and Vice*, and the *Act of Parliament* against profane *Swearing and Cursing*, which Ministers are to read Four times a Year in their Churches and Chappels; and an *Abstract of the Laws* which Magistrates are to Execute for the Suppressing of *Prophaneness and Debauchery*, &c. And in the little Book, call'd, *A Help to Reformation*, besides the *Proclamation*, *Act of Parliament*, and *Abstract* beforementioned, (which are printed for the the Use of Magistrates and Ministers) Magistrates have *Forms of Warrants*, and of a *Register* in those Cases; Inferior Officers have Instructions laid before them for their Executing of their Office with the greatest Advantage; and Private Persons have *Prudential Rules* for the giving of *Informations*,

formations, and the raising of *Societies*; which *Societies*, I must observe to you, have been, from the Beginning of this Undertaking, and will still be, the great Engines for the carrying of it on: And that therefore the most considerable Service that can generally be done in it, will be, in the *Forming of Societies*: Insomuch, that this Work will seldom fail to go on too slowly, and not without some Obstruction in that place where there is not a Society of this kind; but much more easily, steadily and successfully, in any Town or Village where there is one in or near it, tho' it consists but of a few Persons. I have likewise, Sir, sent you some *Blank Warrants* for particular Offences, which those that give Informations are to keep by them, and to fill them up when they have any Informations to give against any prophanes and vicious Persons, with the Offenders Names, Offences, Places of Abode, &c. and to carry them thus filled up to the Magistrates; and being signed by them after their Informations are taken upon Oath, to send or carry them to the best disposed Constables to be executed, for the Ease of Magistrates and their Clerks, who when they happen to be no hearty Friends to these Proceedings, will have the less occasion to be prejudiced against them, and consequently will the less discourage them, when they have not the Trouble of so much as writing, filling up, or sending out of a Warrant. You have moreover sent you some *Lists* of the Names of a vast Number of *Lewd* and *Disorderly Persons*, besides *Common Swearers*, *Drunkards*, &c. who, by the Diligence chiefly of only one Society of Persons, who apply themselves principally to the Suppressing of *Lewd* and *Infamous Houses*, have been brought to Punishment in or near the City of *London*. By which you may be more sensible, what a horrid Nursery of Prophaneness and

Debauchery,

Debauchery, what a Sink of *Uncleanness* this City would have been, and what ground we have to believe, that *Lasciviousness* and *Irreligion* would have more and more prevail'd in this Nation, had it not been for the Endeavours of the Societies ; and that you may be more fully convinc'd with what more Advantage Men proceed in Societies, than they can possibly do alone ; tho' I am apt to think, that the Casuists will not tell you, that Men are not to act singly at such a Juncture as this, for the Suppressing of the publick Dishonour of the *Name*, the *Day*, and the *Laws of God*, when they can't find any to unite with ; that they are not to endeavour to do that Good that is in their Power to do, because they can't do as much Good as they would. I must add, that you may likewise very much promote this Work, by Influencing of Magistrates to do their Duty vigorously herein ; by furthering in as many Places as you can the Choice of good Officers in Corporations, who will have a sense of the Obligations that their Oath and Office lay them under, to endeavour to be serviceable in this Matter ; and by letting Constables know how great a Power they have for the Suppressing all publick Disorders of this kind : And by endeavouring, by your self and Friends, to encline them to exert their Power, in going about into Streets, Markets, and other Publick Places, on Week-Days, for the taking up of *Drunkards*, *Swearers*, &c. and carrying of them before Magistrates ; and on the *Lord's-Day*, by Inspecting into Publick-Houses, for the preventing of *Tipling* ; and by taking up of *Drovers*, *Carriers*, &c. that travel on that Day, and such as carry their Wares or Goods about the Streets to their Customers, or are found at unlawful *Sports* and *Pastimes*, as they are directed in the *Help to Reformation*. One or two Constables that shall thus exercise their Office, will be able very much, if not wholly, to prevent all Disorders.

Disorders of this kind, in most Cities and Corporations of the Nation. I am assured, that in divers Corporations of this Kingdom, as well as in *Ireland*, religious Men have voluntarily taken the Constable's Office upon them, for the more effectual carrying on of this Design. Herein then your Endeavours are like to be more serviceable than in any other thing that I can easily instance, unless it be in the promoting of the

*See the Account of the raising Societies; by which Societies many proper Measures will be thought of, and this Undertaking be put upon the most lasting Foundation. And these are the methods which we find recommended by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Circular Letter, dated 38, 59, 60, April 4. 1699. in which the Bishops of that Province, &c. in their joint Letter concurred. † The remarkable

Words of which Letter are these: Every pious Person of the Laity should, if need be, be put in Mind, that he ought to think himself obliged to use his best Endeavours to give such Offenders punishment by the Civil Magistrates, as can be no otherwise amended; and that when he hears his Neighbour Swear, or Blaspheme the Name of God, or sees him offend in Drunkenness, or Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, he ought to give the Magistrate Notice of it. In such a Case to be called an Informer, will be so far from making any Man odious in the Judgment of sober Persons, that it will tend to his Honour, when he makes it appear by his unblameable Behaviour, and the Care that he takes of himself and his Family, that he doth it purely for the Glory of God, and the Good of his Brethren. Such well-disposed Persons as are resolved upon this, should be encouraged to meet as often as they can, to consult how they may most discreetly and effectually manage it in the Places where they live. Here then Ministers are obliged by their Bishops to put the Laity in Mind of giving of Informa-

formations to Magistrates against Prophaneness and Vice, as a *matter of Duty*, and an *honourable thing*; and to encourage them to *meet frequently together*; and to *consult how they may discreetly and effectually manage it in the places where they live*. And in the fourth Page of this *Letter*, the *Clergy* are directed to invite the Church-Wardens of their several Parishes, and other pious Persons among the Laity, to join with them in the Execution of the most probable Methods that can be suggested for the carrying on a Reformation of Manners; and we are told, that from such Meetings we may expect happy Effects. And in the same *Page* it is observed, that from such Meetings happy Advances have been already made towards a *Reformation of Manners*, which is expressed in these Terms; *From the visible Success of that Noble Zeal wherewith so many about * London the great * Cities in my Neighbourhood do promote true and West-minster. Piety, and a Reformation of Manners.*

And in his Grace's Letter to the Arch-Deacons and the rest of the Clergy of the Diocess of St. David, published the latter end of the last Summer, 1703. his Grace was pleased to express himself in these Terms,

' There are a great many Religious and Worthy Persons
 " in many Parts of the Kingdom, who do still make it
 " their Business to Promote the Execution of good Laws :
 " And I hope any little Indiscretion which may happen
 " among some few of them, will not be made a handle
 " to disparage all such Usefull Proceedings. And tho' I
 " am sensible that it is not meerly the Fear of the Law
 " which must make People true Christians, yet, how-
 " ever, great Good may be done by such Means, thro'
 " God's Blessing : And they who at the first are restrained
 " from doing Evil out of Fear of Punishment, may become
 " Virtuous upon more Spiritual Motives. Likewise many
 " Tempta-

The Arch-
Bishop of
Canterbu-
ry's Letter
to the Re-
verend the
Arch-Dea-
cons and the
rest of the
Clergy of the
Diocess of
St. David,
P. 9, 10.

" Temptations may be removed out of the way, especially
 " of Young People, much open Scandal and Dishonour to God and our Holy Religion may be prevented:
 " And we have also Reason to hope, that if the Edge of
 " the Law, and the Authority of the Magistrate, be
 " turned against Impiety and Immorality, God will not
 " look upon our Sins to be National; and so we may
 " prevent those Judgments which otherwise they would
 " bring upon us: For these Reasons, I think, you will
 " do God, and our Church, and Nation, good Service,
 " if you will make it your Endeavour to give the World
 " all the Marks of your Respect of those Worthy Magistrates, or other Gentlemen, and also of Inferior Persons whom you see Zealous in the Cause of God and Religion, and excite others to follow their Example.

Now then, Sir, you see the Undertaking I recommend to you to engage in, is called by our great Metropolitan, the Cause of God and Religion: And you have moreover the declared Judgment before you of most of our Learned Prelates concerning our giving of Informations, and our associating for the consulting upon the most probable Methods of *Reformation*, and their Judgment with the beforementioned Approbation of Societies, (published in the *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners*) of so many Persons celebrated for Wisdom, and in high Stations in the Church and State, who have herein not only declared their Opinion, *That the Design of putting the Penal-Laws in Execution, for the suppressing of Prophaneness and Debauchery, is for the Honour of Almighty God, and tends to the Advancement of Piety, and Virtue, and the publick Good both of Church and State, and cannot fail of being approved by all good Men.* But that the Method likewise (as the carrying of it on by Societies) is most proper

proper, and, with the Blessing of God attending it, is most likely to prove effectual for the promoting a Reformation of Manners. These things, I say, will afford you an Argument to stop the Mouths of such Persons as either from unhappy Principles, or their Unwillingness to be reformed themselves, may be endeavouring to raise Objections against the giving of Informations, and the Meetings of pious Persons, to concert the most advisable Methods of Suppressing Prophaneness and Vice, and the Promoting of Piety and Virtue, which we call in other Terms, Societies for Reformation of Manners.

But if these things will not silence them, you may then ask them, whether they can in Truth think it does become those that pretend to have a Love for God and their Neighbour, contentedly to hear, without taking any Notice of it, such a multitude that call themselves Christians, using, without Fear or Shame, the most horrid Oaths and Execrations in their ordinary Conversation, even imprecating Damnation on themselves and others, as an Ornament of Speech; to see Drunkenness pass among them for good Humour, and Lewdness for good Breeding; Publick Houses to become Nests for disorderly and profligate Persons, or Stews for the Entertainment of Mens Lusts in all parts of the Nation; * Sodomites (who have been but rarely heard of in this Nation till the last Age) to have their appointed Places of Meeting for their acting their abominable Villanies, and to encrease their Numbers; and Herds of Lewd Women to be continually soliciting of Men to Lewdnes in the open Streets; the Lord's-Day profaned in the most impudent manner, by Mens following of their Trades or ordinary Callings, even keeping open Markets on it, or spending it in Gaming, Tipling, and Excess; in short, to see their GOD put nearly Hell's ditch mire and Blasphemed, and his Laws trans-

* Since the Trial and Punishment of the Sea-Captain for a Sin of this kind, Three Persons, by the Diligence of a Society for Reformation, were found guilty of Sodomy before the Lord Chief Justice Hole at Lent Assizes at Maidstone, and were accordingly executed. And about two Months since one was brought to Punishment for a Sin of this kind in London, & several others have been discredited, and have very nearly lost their influence and credit.

pled on, their Religion professedly attacked, and multitudes of Souls thus to go on in a full Course to destruction, and their Country thereby to be in manifest danger of being ruined, when 'tis so much in their Power, in this happy Juncture more especially, to prevent these Enormities, which are attended with such dreadful Consequences, by their joining their Assistance with their Fellow-Christians, in furthering the Execution of the known Laws of the Land against them, which so many Thousand Magistrates and Inferior Officers have Oaths and Trusts upon them to see executed, (how shamefully soever the generality of them have neglected it) : And, on the other side, whether it is not a most desirable thing, and of mighty Advantage to Religion, that the greatest Temptations to the Sins, to which Men are either accustomed, or have a natural Propensity to, should be taken as much as may be out of their way, and the Avenues to them stopped, that we might converse with our Neighbours, or at least go abroad in the World, without the greatest danger of wounding our Consciences, or of being laugh'd at and scorned for behaving our selves as becomes Christians ; to have Men restrained from an idle and vicious Course of Life, and be thereby brought to take up with honest and useful Employments ; to have the *Lord's-day* and other publick *Fast-days* observed in a solemn and due manner ; to have *Stews* rooted out, and the Streets cleansed from lewd and impudent Women, and detestable *Sodomites*, that infest them ; to have Men restrained from broaching horrid *Blasphemies*, from profane *Swearing* and *Cursing* ; to have Men kept from depriving themselves of their Reason, and from making themselves Beasts by excessive *Drinking* ; to have publick Houses kept within their true and reasonable Use and Design ; from being Receptacles for Persons to spend their Time.

Time and Money in them on Sacred and common Days ; to ruin themselves, and beggar their Families by their *Drakemess* and *Debauchery* ; to have the most abominable Disorders, the execrable Impieties of our most scandalous *Play-Houses*, those Nurseries of Vice and Prophaneness, (whether our Nobility and Gentry are so frequently sent to learn their Accomplishments in their younger Years) suppressed ; to have Religion delivered from the Contempt that profane and vicious Men have so much brought upon it by their Impunity, and publick Countenance in their open and insolent Violations of it ; to have their wicked Combinations broke, and frequent and publick Examples of Prophaneness and Vice taken out of publick View, National Sins (that bring National Judgments) suppress'd, Virtue appear honourable and desirable, Vice infamous and detestable ; and lastly, Men brought to a Regard to Sacred things, to Consideration, and a serious Enquiry into the Nature of Religion, and in time, with God's Blessing, to the Love of it, and this by the due Execution of the Penal-Laws against *Prophaneness* and *Debauchery*, in Conjunction with all the other pious and proper Methods, as of *Instruction*, *Admonition*, *Reproof*; of dispersing of *Books* for the awakening Men to a sense of their Sins, and concern for their Souls, the exciting them to *Family Duty*, and the promoting the *Education of Poor Children* in the Principles of Religion, &c. that are taken by the Societies for this end. When they have allowed these things to be so highly desirable and necessary, as that unless they are in some measure effected, or at least some other extraordinary Methods are set on foot then are at present pursued, there appears no probability that the Tide of Wickedness will be stopped, and Religion flourish among us ; you may then ask them further, whether these things are not what the Societies for Reformation do not only directly

rectly pursue, but have so much already promoted ; that how bad soever our State is with respect to these Matters, yet that 'tis undoubtedly far better, generally speaking, than 'twas when these Endeavours begun, when we were under such unhappy Circumstances, (which I forbear to mention) that if this Undertaking had not been set on foot, we were, I conceive, likely to have been one of the most debauched Nations in Principles and Practice, perhaps in the Christian World. If they will deny these things, which they will not without great Immodesty, you may then desire them honestly to give you their Reasons for their contrary Sentiments; rather than secretly to raise Prejudices against this Design; and that they would also at the same time propose, as is, I think, reasonable they should do, other more Christian and Practicable Methods for the retrieving of Virtue and Religion among us, which, as they are professed Christians, they will allow to be necessary to be endeavoured in one way or other. And if they can prove to you, which they can never do, in Contradiction, I conceive, to holy Writ, and the general Consent of Mankind to the contrary, that our joining our Endeavours in a regular way, for the Suppressing of Prophanes and Vice, and the promoting of Religion by the other beforementioned Methods, is not a Christian Undertaking, it will then appear to you more reasonable and honourable for them either secretly to undermine, or publickly to oppose it, after it hath moreover been declared, by so many Persons in Authority, to be for the publick good, both of Church and State, and the most likely way of promoting a National Reformation, and hath evidently proved so successful for this end. But till this is done, they must give us leave to think, that such Persons as, out of a Love to God and Man, are employed in endeavouring by legal and proper Methods, the preventing the Destruction of so

so great a Number of Souls in our own and other Kingdoms, and of National Judgments, are engaged in a blessed Work ; from which, 'tis to be hoped, that neither their unaccountable Prejudices and Reproaches, nor the Difficulties and Sufferings which are brought upon them by their Means, from profligate Persons, in their discharging their Duty therein, will discourage or deter them ; and that 'tis exceedingly much for the Honour of this Undertaking, that after so many Thousand Persons have been punished for their wicked Practices, and a far greater Number must in all Reason be supposed to have been restrained, in some measure at least, from their sinful Indulgencies, within the *Thirteen Years* that this Design hath been pursued, no Man, that I hear of, since the first Opposition to this Enterprize in its Infancy, hath ventured his Reputation so far, as to publish with a Name, any Objections against it, to tell us any ill Consequences that it hath produced to either Church or State, to charge any Vices on those that have been employed in the forming and carrying of it on, or Irregularities in their Conduct of this Undertaking, tho' in all this time the Enemies of Reformation have surely had a sufficient Opportunity to consider of these Matters ; so that this Design stands at this time so fair in all Respects with the World, that even since the publick Approbation of the Societies by many of our Bishops, &c. in the printed Account of them 1698. and of almost all the rest of them in their Pastoral Letters beforementioned, one of that Reverend Body, the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, in his printed Sermon preach'd to the Societies 1699. tells them, ' That the Service they are employed in is incomparably the most noble and highly Praise-worthy that it could be possible for them to be engaged in. And as for Jealousies of ill Consequences of their Societies (he says), he never heard one wise Word said on that

*The Lord
Bp. of Gloo-
cester's Ser-
mon to the
Societies for r
Reformati
on, preach'd
June 26.
1699. p. 20.*

To-

"Topick, and perswaded himself he never should : And
 "then professes the greatest Hope he had that God hath
 "still Mercy in store for us, is from the excellent Spirit
 "with which he hath endued so great a Number of good
 "Christians among us, for the running down of Wicked-
 "ness, by the most justifiable Means, in their respective
 "Stations ; and the Encouragement that His Majesty hath
 "given to them.

The Lord Bp. of Ely's Sermon to the Societies for Reformation, preach'd Dec. 30. 1700.

The Lord Bishop of *Ely*, in his Sermon preached on the same solemn Occasion, not only highly commended and encouraged the Zeal of those that are engaged in Societies, for the carrying on of a Reformation, but declared, " That he never heard that any of the Persons that were concerned in the Work of Reformation, were chargeable with any of the Vices that they were concerned in, Suppressing ; and that they were Men of Virtue, &c. and fit Persons to be employed in this glorious Undertaking.

The Lord Bp. of Salis- March 1700. burys Ser- deavours of the Societies for Reformati- on, preach'd March 25. 1700. p. 26. 27, 28.

The Lord Bishop of *Salisbury*, in his Sermon preach'd March 1700, hath these Expressions, speaking of the Endeavours of the Societies : " It gives us some small beginnings of Hope, that in and about this great City, there has been for some Years a Spirit stirring, that looks like a Reviving, as if our dry Bones could live again : Blessed be God for this door of Hope which he is thus opening ; and blessed be they of the Lord who have offered themselves so willingly before Him, and before all the People ; their Names shall be of a good Savour in the present, and in the succeeding Generations, who have begun to set forward so noble a Design, to put a stop to so many vicious Practises, and to raise a Spirit of true Piety among us. These are the *Salt* of the Earth, the *Pillars* of it, and the *Light* of the World.

The

The Lord Bishop of Chester, in his Sermon preach'd <sup>The Lord
Bp. of Che-
ster's Ser-</sup> to the Societies March 30. 1701. applied himself in these <sup>mon to the
Societies for
Reformati-
on, preach'd
March 31.</sup> Terms to the Persons concerned in the Reformation of Manners: " You who are concerned in Societies, on purpose for the promoting this great and noble Design, have, no doubt, met with great Opposition, especially when you first entered upon it: but by how much the greater that was, by so much the greater will your Reward be. The most difficult part of your Work is already over, and your Progress for the future will be daily more easie. You have the Hearts and Prayers of all good Men with you; yea, the Almighty Lord and Governour of the World is on your side. Since it is his Cause you have undertaken you need not fear, tho' all the Powers of Earth and Hell should be mustered up against you. Go on therefore courageously in the Work you have so happily begun, and in which you have hitherto met with Success beyond your Hopes; many even of the most remote Parts of the Nation have already followed you, and the rest when they shall come to be better acquainted with it, may be influenced by your Example, till by degrees such a general Reformation may issue, as may make this a happy Nation, and may render your Names for ever Blessed who have been the chief Instruments of it.

The Reverend Dr. Kennet, in his Sermon preach'd <sup>The Rever-
end Dr.
Kennet's Sermon to
the Societies for Reform-
ation, preach'd
Dec. 11. 1701.</sup> to the Societies last Decemb. 1701. says thus: ' Firm Alliances and strong Confederacy was needful to pull down the Empire of Sin and Wickedness. A Mercy of God that Men of Honour and Conscience fell into a nation, happy Understanding, and joined Hearts and Hands to reduce the exorbitant Power of Satan. My Brethren, Divine Wisdom did direct you, &c. Your voluntary Societies.'

Societies to suppress Vice and Immorality raise not the Jealousie of your Governours, they are wiser and better; they only raise the Envy of the Wicked, and the Fury of Hell. The Devil and their earthly Fiends do know, that you have now an Army of Christians to engage their spiritual Powers, with all prospect of Success to your glorious Expedition.----- Your want of greater Success has been owing to the Obstruction and Opposition from the Adversaries of God and Goodness, who have put *Stumbling-Blocks*, and even Snares in your way.----- The Wonder is, that God should bless so small a Beginning with so great an Increase of Prosperity and happy Effects; & raise the Envy of the Wicked, when I say, that the Fame of our *English Societies*, to suppress Vice and Prophaneness, has spread into many Lands: The several Accounts of our Societies, have been Translated into many Languages: The good Example has been followed in some Foreign Parts, from whence Letters have been often sent hither from Men of the highest Character, to extol this publick Spirit of our Nation, and to pray for the Almighty's Blessing on it--- Within a few Years, by the working of this publick Spirit, a Multitude of Sinners have been reprov'd, and to appearance at least have been reform'd; by a moderate Calculation, no less than Thirty Thousand Persons have been convicted for *prophane Swearing and Cursing*, near the same Number of *Lewd and Disorderly Persons* have been brought to a merciful Punishment, and were thereby reclaim'd from their Vices, or at least restrained from the publick Scandal of them, &c. Above One Hundred Thousand Books of Religion, and Disswafives from the Vices of the Age have been given away. All the Inhabitants of this City can attest this Truth, that of late Years Lewdness and Prophaneness have been visibly decreased. &c. 'Tis, I think, worthy the Care of our

' Clergy to countenance those Persons of their Parish,
 ' who have voluntarily engaged to carry on the Work,
 ' of Righteousness and Judgment, of being Fellow-workers,
 ' in Converting of Sinners, and Saving of Souls.

The Lord Bishop of Oxford, in his Sermon preach'd
 to the Societies for Reformation of Manners <sup>The Lord
Bp. of Ox-
ford's Scr-
mos to the
Societies for
Reformati-
on, preach'd
Dec. 30.</sup> March 1702. hatl these Expressions : ' Since the Design and
 ' Tendency of the Son of God's taking our Nature upon
 ' him, and of his whole Transaction in that Nature, was,
 ' to extirpate Wickedness and Vice, and promote Purity
 ' and Holiness among Men, what an unspeakable Comfort
 ' and Encouragement must this Doctrine afford to all
 ' those that are seriously concerned in that Glorious At-
 ' tempt of Reforming a loose Age. Suffer then the Word,
 ' of Exhortation, and of Consolation too, Ye Brave and
 ' truly Heroick Souls, who have enter'd into a holy Con-
 ' federacy, not only against Flesh and Blood, but also, a-
 ' gainst Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of
 ' the Darkness of this World, against Spiritual Wickedness
 ' in high places. Your Adversaries are numerous and
 ' powerful, The Prince of the Power of the Air, with his
 ' Rulers and Companies, and the Children of Disobedience
 ' upon Earth, in whom he worketh, all evil Spirits, and all
 ' wicked Men; and from these ye must expect the most
 ' vigorous and obstinate Opposition: But be not afraid of
 ' their Terrors, remember, that the Battle is not yours,
 ' but God's; that the Cause in which you are engag'd
 ' is his, to whose absolute Dominion Heaven, and Earth,
 ' and Hell, Angels, and Men, and Devils must submit,
 ' and whom no Counsel or Power can oppose.'

' If those Generous and Publick Spirits are deservedly
 ' Honour'd and Admir'd, who are instrumental in break-
 ' ing the Power of Earthly Tyrants, and vindicating the
 ' just
 E

' just Liberties of Men from their Oppression, how much
 ' higher must their Characters rise, who are Instruments
 ' in the Hands of God for opposing that universal Tyr-
 ' ancy which the Devil, the Prince of the Air, would ex-
 ' ercise over the Souls of Men, for breaking the Fetters
 ' wherewith he enslaves them, and bringing them into
 ' the Service of God, which is perfect Freedom ?

' Those Fools, that make a Mock at Sin, and a Jest of
 ' Religion, those despicable Wretches, who serve the Devil
 ' and divers Lusts, and are Vassals to their own brutish
 ' Appetites and Affections, may despise and revile you :
 ' But so would they have dealt with the Son of God, had
 ' they lived when he was upon Earth, and so did the
 ' Wicked of that Age treat him, and for the same Reason ;
 ' and surely, when you consider him that endur'd such Contra-
 ' dictions of Sinners against himself, you will not for any Re-
 ' proaches you shall suffer from such, for his Sake and Ser-
 ' vice, grow weary and faint in your Minds : You will go on
 ' with Alacrity, when you are assur'd of the Countenance
 ' and Encouragement of your Governours ; when your
 ' most Gracious Queen, in the very Beginning of Her
 ' Reign, has publickly own'd the Cause you are engag'd
 ' in; and when you may with the greatest Confidence,
 ' depend upon the Value and Esteem, the Love and good
 ' Wishes, the fervent Prayers and best Assistance of all
 ' wise and good Men. You will persevere to the End in
 ' this God-like Employment, when it affords you the
 ' Glorious Prospect of being found, when your Lord shall
 ' call you hence, doing that which he himself was doing
 ' when he was here. With what Extasies of Joy will
 ' one so found be transported at the Approach of Death ?

The Reverend Dr. Stanhope, in his Sermon
 preached to the Societies, Decemb. 28. 1702. says thus,
 " The

" The End you propose to your selves by these Societies, is, *Dean of Canterbury*
 " without Dispute, commendable and good ; Approved *Countenanc'd in his Sermons*
 " by all whose Approbation is of value ; *to the Societies for Re-*
 " particular manner by that Pious Queen of ever precious *Memory, &c.* Enforced frequently by His late Majesty, *formation,*
 " and now afresh by Her present Majesty. But still, *preach'd Dec. 28.*
 " though back'd and supported with all these Advan- *1702.*
 " tages, Reformation of Manners, almost above any o-
 " ther Undertaking, is certain to encounter with a World
 " of Difficulties and Prejudices. I dare presume, upon
 " leave in your Names, to declare, that you know not
 " how to wish any thing more for the general Reputa-
 " tion and Advantage of the Work you have undertaken,
 " than that all Persons, fit to be satisfied with the Me-
 " thods as well as Design, would strictly enquire into
 " your Orders, the Caution, the Prudence, and the En-
 " deavours, that no Irregularity shall blemish the Ma-
 " nagement of them.

" It is so far from being a Comfort or an Abatement,
 " as to be indeed the highest Aggravation of our Folly
 " and our Sorrows, to enjoy the best Laws and the
 " happiest Constitution, if we turn the one into a dead
 " Letter, and will not suffer our selves to be bless'd by
 " the other. But bless'd by either we can never be, ex-
 " cept effectual Care be taken for the exemplary Pu-
 " nishment of Wickedness, which if triumphant, and
 " once an Over-match for Authority and Virtue, will
 " soon subvert the very Foundations upon which all Go-
 " vernment stands, and must, in the course of things,
 " prove our swiftest, our heaviest, and most irreparable
 " Destruction.

" Pray let any serious Man consider, Is it our Secu-
 " rity, our Honour, to have wholesome Laws ? and can
 " it be infamous to endeavour that we shall have them

" to no purpose? Is this to be Subjects and Patriots? Is
 " this to be good Men and Christians, to think Civility
 " obliges us to see the most sacred things insulted and
 " trodden under Foot, without vindicating or taking any
 " notice of the Affront? Did Martyrs ever dare to die
 " for Religion, when the Laws of the State were against
 " it; and have not we the Courage to speak or shew
 " any Concern for Religion, when the Constitution is
 " on our side, and all for fear that they who have no
 " regard to Religion, should hate or revile us for calling
 " them to account? Can any Fidelity oblige us to flat-
 " ter Men in Wickedness, or the Rules of good Breed-
 " ing supersede those of the Bible and our Statute-Book?
 " The Heathen Orator could say, that no Friendship
 " binds against the Common-Interest. And is it then
 " a Bar to the higher and antecedent Engagements of
 " Oaths and Vows, and Sacramental Covenants super-
 " added to the Advantage of the Publick; let us not,
 " I beseech you, continue to delude our selves with
 " false Notions and empty Names, for such are Honour,
 " Decency, and Friendship, when set in Opposition to
 " Virtue, Religion, and the Common Good: nay, they
 " are worse than empty Names, they are the Honour
 " of *Conspirators*, the Decency of *Parasites*, the Friend-
 " ship of *Banditti* and *Murderers*.

" Light and Darkness are not more distant than are
 " this venomous Brood from you good Men, whose
 " only Business and Desire it is to restrain those Exor-
 " bitancies, which no good Man can, or ought, patiently
 " to see rampant and out-braving the Laws of God and
 " Man by their Impunity, &c.

" The only part remaining for me on this Occasion,
 " is to say, for all the Good ye have already done the
 " Cause

‘ Cause of God and Virtue, blessed be ye of the Lord, &c.

The Bishop of Chichester, in his Sermon preached on <sup>The Lord
Bishop of
Chichester's</sup> the same Occasion, March 30th, 1703. thus expressed himself. ‘ Almighty God expects that his Honour shou’d <sup>Sermon to
the Societies
for Reformation,
March 30.
1703.</sup> be righted, his Justice vindicated amongst Men, by their making such Laws as shall best answer that end, and by supporting those Laws by a due and vigorous Execution, as the Case shall require, &c.

‘ When Matters are come to this Extremity, when the Provocations run high, that Authority is affronted, and the most sacred things prophaned; that Men make a Mock at Sin, and it walks abroad with a bare-faced Impudence, Compassion is then a Fault, and next to them that do offend, are they to be reputed guilty, who have it in their Power, and to whose Station and Place it doth belong, shall yet take no Care to disown and punish that which the Laws of God and Men do assign proper Punishments for, &c.

‘ It becomes necessary to make an Example of notorious Offenders, partly for their own Sakes, whom when nothing else will, this may happen to reclaim; and much more for the sake of others, that, as the Apostle saith, *others may fear*, who when they shall see the Laws impartially executed, are then likely, if ever, to be reformed, and prevented from committing the like Crimes, tho’ otherwise tempted or disposed to the Practice of them.

‘ There are Private Persons who may observe, reprove, admonish, threaten, discover, complain, appeal, and who are to act as the Occasion shall offer; and indeed without this little Good is to be done; because those that have Authority to punish, have not the Opportunity.

• nity often of observing, so that, generally speaking, as
 ' a Reformation depends much upon a due Execution of
 ' the Laws, so it is as much depending upon a due Infor-
 ' mation; and which is so much the harder to find a Zeal
 ' for, because it is in them that undertake it, a voluntary
 ' Act, and to which they are by no other Law obliged
 ' ordinarily, than that of Conscience, and a true Zeal for
 ' the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind, &c.

‘ Perhaps there is no Nation in the World that hath
 ' so good Laws against Immorality and Vice in all In-
 ' stances of it, as ours: And therefore if the Execution
 ' correspond with the Law, there cannot but be a due
 ' Regularity amongst all Orders of Men. But the Laws
 ' of themselves are a dead Letter, and 'tis Accusation and
 ' Execution gives Life to them ; and if either of these be
 ' wanting, that either it is not complain'd of (when no-
 ' torious and there is a Necessity for it) or not punished
 ' upon the Complaint, the Nation it self is in Danger, and
 ' the Government must sink under the Weight of such
 ' Remisnells, and all the evil Effects which follow such a
 ' Neglect, will be justly chargeable upon them, who ei-
 ' ther as private Christians, or Men in place, are obliged
 ' to stand up in maintaining those Laws in full Authority,
 ' which have been made amongst us, &c.

‘ What remains then, but that since we have all by
 ' Profession listed our selves under the Banner of our
 ' Lord and Saviour against Sin, the World, and the Devil,
 ' that we in our several Places and Capacities wage War
 ' with those Enemies of his Kingdom and our Salvation,
 ' that we, as St. Jude faith ver. 3. be exhorted that
 ' we earnestly contend for the Faith which was once de-
 ' livered to the Saints, against all Irreligion, Blas-
 ' phemy and Prophaneness, against all Wickedness and
 ' Immo-

‘ Immorality, and persevere therein notwithstanding all Discouragements whatsoever ; and may this so be done to the end. But when I say Discouragements, I may recall it, when we have not only the Protection, but the Authority and Command of Her present Majesty to enforce it. When we have such a visible Success attending this Undertaking. When that which was like Elijah’s Cloud, as a Man’s Hand, has extended it self far and near, not only through many, if not most of the reformed Churches of Europe, but hath carried its triumphant Banners even to America, and we hope, in conjunction with that so celebrated a Corporation now established, may end as well in the Conversion of the Barbarous Natives of remote Parts to Christianity, as of Christians to a better and more religious Temper and State of Life.

‘ What Encouragement is this ! or when had the Nation or Church a greater Glory attending it ; when a Work so honourable to our Religion hath England appealing at the Head of it ? So that upon the Prospect of what is in View, and of what is under Consideration amongst us, God seems to have a Reserve of Mercy for this Church and Nation, &c.

The Reverend Dr. Willis, in his Sermon preached to the Societies, Decem. 1703. thus expresses himself : ‘ As our Blessed Saviour was contented to do good notwithstanding all the Ingratitude and evil returns he met with ; so he did at last lay down his Life in the same Cause. All this he underwent to do us good ; and therefore I hope we shall not grudge a little of our pains and charge to carry on those good Designs, for which he did and suffered so much, &c.

The Revd Dr. Willis,
Dean of Lincoln, his
Sermon to the Societies
for Reformation,
Dec. 1703..

‘ I shall.

' I shall take notice of some of those Ways or Instances, wherein more especially we ought to do good to others, and whereby we may best serve the Design of our present meeting together.

1. ' We ought, as Providence puts it in our Power, to do what good we can to the Souls of Men ; and as this is really the greatest good we can do them ; so there is no Man but may one way or other be serviceable in this respect, &c. And a great deal of this might be done without setting up for the Office of Ministers, would Men, as I have shewed before, do the Duty of good Fathers and good Masters, of good Magistrates, and good Friends, of good Men, and good Neighbours.

2. ' It is the Busines of him that is a Magistrate, or to whom God has given Power, and Authority, and Reputation in the World, to make use of those advantages to restrain the Wickedness of Men, to prevent Publick Scandal, and to Incourage those that do well. ' Tis certainly the Duty of such Persons, tho' they cannot prevent all Vice, yet however to see that wickedness shan't openly and publickly brave it, that it shan't grow impudent and barefaced, and run down Piety and Religion. In short, 'tis the Duty of those in Power and Authority to stand up for the Cause of God, who gave them that Power, to be Men of Piety and Religion themselves, and to do what they can that other People may be so too.

' I shall add only these Two Considerations on this Head, and then proceed :

¶, That

1st, That Wicked Men are, I won't say so zealous, but
 ' so busie and active in promoting Wickedness in the
 ' World, in procuring Companions in Sin, and in making
 ' Lewdness and Debauchery easie to Mens Consciences ;
 ' that the World will be in great Danger of being over-
 ' run by it, if those that are good wo'nt in some pro-
 ' portion indeavour to stop the Torrent ; and take some
 ' pains to reclaim, as well as others to corrupt and de-
 ' bauch those about them. And certainly this is one of
 ' all the Causes in the World that Men need not and should
 ' not be bashful in ; for it is to be ashamed of doing the
 ' best Work they can do ; it is to be ashamed of the Cause
 ' of God, and of their Religion ; for 'tis Piety, and Vir-
 ' tue, and the Fear of God, that are our Religion more
 ' than any particular Opinions, and he that's ashamed
 ' or afraid to profess and practise those himself, or to pro-
 ' mote them in otlers, is truly ashamed of Christ and
 ' his Word ; of which I shall say nothing but the Words
 ' of our Blessed himself, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me*
 ' *and of my Word in this Adulterous and Sinful Genera-*
 ' *tion, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes*
 ' *in his Glory before his Father and the Holy Angels.*

2dly, The Second Consideration I would propose is
 ' this, That many of us heretofore may have been too
 ' instrumental in the Devil's Service, and contributed to-
 ' wards the Corruption of the World, and the loss of
 ' Souls, by our Influence or Authority, or evil Example ;
 ' and therefore, as God expects we should make Repara-
 ' tion for Wrong done according to our Power ; it lies
 ' upon us to undo this as much as we can ; especially
 ' to endeavour to bring over those Persons we may have
 ' been the means of Corrupting ; but if that be now out
 ' of our Power, either by reason of distance of place, or

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‘ diversity of condition, or because they are already entered upon their unchangeable State, or so hardened in Sin that we cannot do any good upon them ; yet however, still Reparation is to be made to the World for the Mischief and Disorder that may have been caused by this means, and especially to our Saviour Jesus Christ, for the weakening his Kingdom, and the loss of those Souls he died to save.

‘ The last way I shall mention of doing good to the Publick is, That tho’ we have no hand in Publick Offices or Affairs our selves, yet we should do what we can in our private Capacity to encourage those who are zealous to put Laws in Execution for the Publick Good; especially for the Suppressing of Prophaneness and Immorality, as being one of the best Services they can do, both for the Church and the Kingdom : Our Duty with respect to such Persons is, to honour and esteem them ; to give them the Praise that is due to such worthy Designs ; to put the best Construction upon their Actions ; and by doing what we can to make the thing honourable to encourage others to do the same Zeal.

‘ It has been a great Discouragement to such good Designs, that if Men are active to put Laws in Execution, they must provoke a great many whose Interest or whose Appetites are to be controuled and restrained, and such as these will be clamorous and noisy, and they will always find some to countenance them who affect the Reputation of being Wise by doing nothing, and by neither giving themselves nor any Body else any trouble. And therefore on the other side, all that wish well to so good a Work should stand up in their Defence, and give them their due Praise, and make

‘ make this, which is indeed the Cause of God, Honourable in the World.

‘ It is indeed the Duty of good Christians to be Zealous in the Service of God whatever Treatment they meet with, to go through *evil Report or good Report* themselves, so they can but bring Honour to God ; and I question not but there are a great many who would do it, and cheerfully too. But I am sure it is not for the Honour of God, or the Good of the World that they should be put upon this Trial. No, to respect such Persons is what the good cause they ingaged in requires from us, and what we ought in Gratitude to pay those who are the Instruments of doing good to the World.

‘ I would now in the last place address my self to those worthy Persons who are more particularly concerned in the occasion of our present meeting together, Whether Magistrates, or Assistants to those good Designs by their Advice and Contributions, or lastly those who by their Pains and Trouble in giving Informations enable the Magistrates more effectually to do their Duty.

‘ Your good Designs and the good Effects of them are now so manifest, that I need not give any particular account of them, and much less need to lay any thing in their defence; what you have already done, and what you are still doing does not require an Apology, but the Praise and Thankfulness of all good Men, of all those that wish well either to Religion, or their Country ; which I hope you have, and their Prayers too, that God would increase your Numbers, and strengthen your Hands, and give a Blessing to your Endeavours.

I have all along hinted at many Arguments which
may encourage you *not to be weary in well doing*, and
therefore shall now only propose these two things more
to your Consideration and so conclude.

1. The first is this, That tho' the Work, in which you
are engaged, be in it self a Work of *Justice*, yet it is also
a Work of the greatest *Charity*. It is great Charity to
the Souls of Men, to their Bodies, to their Families,
and to all that belong to them, all which are great Suf-
ferers by Vice and Immorality. It is frequently a
great Charity and Kindness to the Offenders themselves,
who may be amended, or at least restrained by the
Correction of the Law : but it is always a Charity to
our Country to prevent Disorders in it, and to many
particular Persons who may be kept within Bounds by
the Example of the Punishment of others.

As a prudent restraint may preserve a Man's Inno-
cence, and prevent his Corruption, so it may bring
him to Consideration afterwards, and by that be the
beginning of a sincere Conversion. When a Person
finds his way hedg'd up with Briars and Thorns, it
may make him think of returning, and be more ready
to hearken to the Monitions of his Conscience, and the
good Advice of Friends or Ministers, and we have fre-
quent Instances of the Conversions of Men which have
had their beginning upon this Bottom ; and therefore
the removing Temptations, and the making Vice diffi-
cult and uneasy by the execution of the Laws against it,
is upon all accounts a great Charity.

2. The other Argument I would make use of to en-
courage your Zeal is this, That the engaging the Au-
thority of the Law, and the Power of the Magistrates
against

‘ against Immorality and Prophaneness, is the most likely Method to prevent the Judgments of God, which they may otherwise bring down upon our Church and Nation.

‘ National Sins deserve National Judgments ; and unless God have some other wise Ends of his Providence to serve by sparing such a Nation, will very likely bring them down upon it ; upon which account the best Service we can do our Country is, to endeavour by a general Reformation to appease the Wrath of God : but if that cannot be done, however to turn the Edge of the Law, and the Authority of the Nation against Sin and Wickedness, which if we do, we have Reason to hope, that tho’ the Offenders may be many, yet that God will not look upon the Wickedness to be National, nor Punish the whole for it, but let every Man bear his own Burthen, and the Guilt follow only the particular Offenders.

‘ The last thing I would observe is this, That this Zeal of *Phineas*, which you see had such great Effects, was only the Zeal of a single Person ; which should be a great encouragement to us, to do our Duty, and to be Zealous for God and Religion, tho’ we have not so many to joyn with us, as we might perhaps desire. I am afraid that a great many are apt to be discouraged by thinking that all they can do will signify very little, as to the main of Affairs, that if the World be wicked, it is like to be so still, when they have done all they can, and that if God be angry with us for our Sins, it is not a single Person, or a few that can turn away his Wrath ; such thoughts as these, I doubt, make too many lie quite still, and neglect to do what otherwise they might and would do : but we ought to remember, that

' that every one should make this excuse for himself, as
 ' it is certain one may make it as well as another, the
 ' World would quickly be a sad place, and much worse
 ' than it is; and on the other side, did none discourage
 ' themselves by this, it might quickly be much better.
 ' We ought all therefore chearfully to do our Duties in
 ' our several Stations, and leave the event to God. It is
 ' not any one Soldier in an Army, that can, tho' by
 ' the greatest Valour, do much toward the Success of a
 ' War : but if every one should under that pretence ex-
 ' cuse himself, they would then all together do nothing.
 ' We cannot tell how much good a Man may do in the
 ' World, that does heartily and seriously set about it: or
 ' how few People, that do with Zeal and Vigor set them-
 ' selves against the wickedness of the Times, and hear-
 ' tily interceed with God, may turn his Wrath away
 ' from us. We cannot but be all sensible what marks of
 ' his Displeasure we felt in the late dreadful Storm, and in
 ' what a critical Posture our Affairs now stand; and
 ' therefore how much it concerns us to make our Peace
 ' with him, least he quite give us up.

' To Conclude all in a Word, We have this further
 ' encouragement to do our Duty, that if God should, for
 ' the sake of those that are good among us, think fit to
 ' spare us, yet they, who do by their ill Lives and Neg-
 ' ligence their part to provoke his Wrath, shall have all
 ' the Guilt of it to answer for in another World: and
 ' on the other side, there is this comfort for those who
 ' do endeavour to stand in the Gap, that if notwithstanding
 ' all they can do yet Iniquity does still so abound, that
 ' God shall think fit to give us up, their labour shall not
 ' be lost; God will either save them from the common
 ' Calamity; or bless them under it, or, which will be
 ' better than all, by it bring them to Heaven.

It may not be an unnecessary Caution that I now give you, notwithstanding all these Encouragements and all the Advantages I have here laid before you for your engaging vigorously in this Noble Design, not to be easily discouraged by the small Number of your Friends, or others, that may heartily concur with you in it, upon its being recommended to them, at the first especially. The Number of zealous and prudent Christians are, I doubt, few in comparison with the Lukewarm and Prophane, in most Places, Four or Five of these will make a good Beginning in any Place, tho' they should be of the Inferior Rank ; of which sort of Men, I conceive, Societies may be more easily rais'd, not only because these are of the far greater Number, but because Men of Title and of great Estates, too seldom apply themselves to Religious Undertakings, wherein much Trouble or Shame may be expected : Nor are you to be disheartened by the backwardness of Magistrates, if it should fare so hard with you, as that you have but one Magistrate near you that hath a just fence of his Duty in this respect, and that will readily receive Informations ; and others, in defiance of all their Obligations, in contempt of the repeated Commands of the Government, and in manifest contradiction to their * printed Orders of Sessions, (wherein they formally invite good Christians to give Informations against the Breaches of the Laws, and promise to give them all due Encouragement in it) will do it only because they can't avoid it, and therefore act with Discouragement to faithful Officers, and such other pious Persons, as out of a Love to God and their Neighbour bring them Informations, by giving them unnecessary Delays, and putting them under all manner of Discouragements when they attend upon them on this Occasion : Nor by the Reproaches of bad Men, nay, of Friends and Relations, when you have the Laws of God and of the Nation,

* Orders of Sessions that encourage good Christians and good Citizens to give Informations against Prophane and vicious Persons.
Glost. July 8. 1691.
Middl. Ju

Lon. 1691.

Heref. 05.

5. 1691. Her Majesty's, the late King's, and your late Representatives in Parliament Declarations, the publick Approbations of Ministers of State, so many Lords, Bishops, and Judges of Two Kingdoms, and of the Nobility and Clergy of the Third; the Assistance of those that are already engaged in this Undertaking, the Esteem and Prayers of other good Men, and your own Conscience on your side. If this is a good Work, such Discouragements as these are to be expected in so degenerate an Age as we are fallen into, since Oppositions, either publick or private, under one pretence or other, to good Designs, for the beating down of the Devil's Kingdom, have ever been in the World, and may, I think, ever be expected from wicked Men, who are the Devil's Instruments, whilst there are any such in it. Nay, such Obstructions as I have mentioned, and others of the same kind, have been, and may still be met with from many of those that are not only not accounted the worst sort of Men, but from whom Encouragement and Assistance in these Matters might reasonably be hop'd; tho' it may appear a very shocking thing, and I am apt to think will be so to the Ages to come, that such as are not thought to be the Enemies of God and Religion, should with any countenance continue to give open Obstructions to the Execution of the Laws against Profaneness and Vice, and other charitable and proper Methods of furthering the Reformation of Mens Lives, and the Saving of their Country from ruine; and especially that they should do this in a Protestant Country, where these Methods have been approv'd in so publick and solemn a manner, by so many Persons in Authority in Church and State, that few, if any good Designs that have been set on foot in it, or in any other Christian Country, have ever been. Oppositions, and even sufferings, when they encounter us in this glorious Cause, are

are

are then, I think, to be born with Patience, if not with Cheerfulness, out of a Love to God and our Neighbour, and in hopes of an everlasting Recompence for all our Sufferings in the Cause of our Lord and Master on the other side of the Grave.

To conclude, Sir, you are, I hope, by this time of opinion, that there hath not been a matter of greater Consequence proposed to you perhaps in your Life, or a greater opportunity offered you of doing more good to the World, nor probably ever may be. God grant that you may have a right Understanding of it, and a Will to act accordingly, zealously to pursue all proper Methods of Reformation, so as may be most for the Honour of God, the Interest of Mankind, and your everlasting Comfort. I may possibly, Sir, in a Month or two, desire of you the Trouble, I hope I might more justly say the Pleasure, of an Account of some considerable Progress that you have made in this great Affair, directed to such a place as I may give you notice of in my Letter, when I may send you such other Directions as may be thought necessary; tho I presume, that these I have now communicated to you, with those contained in the Books I herewith send you, and which your own Judgment and Experience may supply you with, may, generally speaking, be sufficient not only for yours and your Friends acting vigorously and with Advantage in the Places near you, but to enable you and them to set this Matter on foot in any Town or larger Village of the Kingdom, where you have an Acquaintance with, or but the bare Knowledge of any religious and tolerably prudent Person, to whom you may know how to send the Books I have mentioned; and shall communicate the Directions I have given you in this long Letter, for your full Instruction in this pious Work.

S I R,

Tours.

G

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Should, Sir, tell you, that the little Discourses against Prophanie Swearing and Cursing, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, and Prophanation of the Lord's Day, &c. and the Answer to the Scandalous Objections that are made against those pious and useful Persons as, out of a Love to God and their Neighbour, give Informations to the Magistrates of these Enormities, which are sent you, with the other Books, may be given to such as are guilty of any of these Offences, and especially by such as inform against them, and at that time that they are convicted of these Offences, by the Magistrates, (with whom, or their Clerks, some Number of them may be lodg'd, to be thus disposed of) for the furthering of their Repentance for their Sin, that they may avoid the everlasting Punishment of it, at a time when they are so apt to be awakened to Consideration, and a sense of their Sin, which are great Steps toward Conversion, by the Temporal Punishment and Shame that is inflicted upon them ; and that moreover such Offenders may be fully convinc'd, that the Persons that bring them to Punishment do therein as becomes good Christians, and Members of the Community, for religious Ends, and with charitable Intentions towards them ; and may not therefore add to their Sin and Folly by entertaining any unchristian Resentments for their thus acting : and this is a Method that I find recommended by those that are concerned in some of the Societies for Reformation, who have given away, at their own Expence, a great many thousands of them, besides about Ten Thousand of the larger Books which I have sent you relating to this Design, and a vast number of other Books for the awakening of Men to a Sense of their Sins,

Sins, and care of their Souls. I might have likewise added, that this great Work may be very much promoted by yours and your Friends acquainting well-inclined Persons, that they may be very serviceable in buying up and giving away any of these Books, as of the *Account of the Societies*, and the *Help to Reformation*, which are now, for the General Benefit of the Publick, sold at a very unusual cheap rate.

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The

The Obligations of a Justice of the Peace,

To be diligent in the Execution of the Penal
Laws against Prophaneness and Debauchery, for
the Effecting of a National Reformation.

In a Letter to a Friend.

S I R,

I Gave you in my last long Letter an Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners ; and I could not but hope that you would be well pleased to hear, that the Endeavours of it, that have so lately obtain'd the Approbation and Countenance of many of the Lords, Bishops and Judges of the Kingdoms of England and Ireland, and of the Nobility and Clergy of Scotland, have been successful for the giving a Check to the horrid Debauchery and Impieties of the Age ; that Attempts of this kind were likewise carrying on in our Neighbouring and some more remote Nations ; and in several of them, by the Influence of our Endeavours here, which may give you just hopes not only of a further Reformation in those Countries, but that this great Work will be set on foot in other parts of the World, when the Account of the Scheme and Success of our Endeavours therein, which is now translating into the more general Languages, are known to them. And having done this more particularly in that long Letter, I then offered you some Motives and Directions for your engaging with more Advantage

vantage in this Noble Undertaking : But I consider'd you, Sir, therein only as a private Christian, and a good Member of the Community, as one without any publick Authority, and under no other Obligations to be active in this pious Work than what your Religion in general, and your Baptismal Engagements (whereby you were listed in your Lord and Master's Service, against the Devil's Kingdom) laid upon you, which I hope, you thought sufficient to engage you in it ; but having understood, that since the Regulation of the *Commission of the Peace* in your County, you are put into that Commission, I take the freedom to lay before you some other Considerations that are proper and more peculiar to you, as you are in that publick Capacity.

And give me leave, *Sir*, to put you in mind, that besides your Obligations as a Christian and a Member of the Community, to concur in promoting this hopeful Reformation, you are, if you take upon you this Commission, under other Engagements, as you are a *Magistrate*, and have taken an Oath and a publick Trust upon you to execute the Laws ; which surely, *Sir*, are very great and indispensable Obligations. But further, by your being invested with Authority, you have thereby a manifest Advantage for the furthering of this Work, which private Persons are also without, who, notwithstanding all their Disadvantages, act herein with great Concern and Success, in most Parts of the Kingdom, and who, by doing so, are as it were Eyes and Hands to Magistrates, and give them a still greater Advantage, and which do make such Magistrates as do not exercise their Authority, and endeavour to discharge their Obligations in some measure as they ought, now appear more inexcusable.

If then 'tis so evident, that Magistrates are thus under various and indispensable Obligations to execute the Laws for

for the suppressing of Vice and Prophaneness, can any Magistrates that are willing to acquit themselves herein as they ought, think that they ought to do less, tho' they should therein receive Discouragements from wicked Men, and from some perhaps of their own Body, than to suppress the open Violations of those Laws, when they come to have a Knowldg of them, as *Prophane Swearing and Cursing*, by Persons of what Quality soever; than to take their Walks sometimes, as some truly honourable Magistrates here do (whose Names will surely be mention'd with Honour in the Records of Ages to come) to observe what Disorders there are committed in their Corporations, or other Places near them; to inspect into publick Houses on the *Lord's Day*, as the Justices of *Middlesex* have formerly, and very lately agreed among themselves to do (as appears by their *printed Orders of Sessions) for the punishing and preventing of *Tipling* in them; and to hinder *Drovers*, *Carriers*, &c. travelling on that Day; and to send out their Constables for the same purpose on the *Lord's Day*; and on other Days of the Week ordering of them to go about the Streets, and into the Markets, and other publick Places, to take up *Swearers*, *Drunkards*, and *lewd Persons*, out of Houses of ill Fame, and to bring 'em before them to be punish'd (which Constables may do without a Warrant from a Justice) and to make examples of such Officers as they find negligent in their Duty in these Matters; and more especially to give dispatch, respect, and all possible Encouragement to such pious and highly useful Persons, as often with great Trouble, Difficulty and Hazard (and too frequently with greater Damage and Charge to them than the Penalty, which the Law inflicts on the prophane and vicious Persons that they inform against, amounts to) for the suppressing of the Dishonour that is so openly offer'd to Almighty

God

* Middlesex
Order Jan.
13. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Middlesex April
13. 1702.

God, the temporal and eternal Ruin of their Fellow-Christians, and of national Judgments, bring them Informations of any of the Disorders that I have mentioned, or any other Breaches of the Laws of the same kind; to which they have been incited and encouraged by his Majesty's *Proclamations*, the * printed *Orders of Sessions* that of the Justices of the Peace of many Counties and Cities of the Kingdom, the Discourses of many of our Reverend Divines lately publish'd, and the *Circular Letter* of the Lord Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, dated Apr. 4. 1699. in which the Bishops of that Province concurr'd; wherein, as I told you in my last, Ministers are directed by their Bishops to put the Laity in mind that 'tis their Duty to give such Informations, and to meet frequently together, to consult upon the most advisable Methods of doing it; and such Meetings, and others of this kind, which we call *Societies for Reformation of Manners*, and which so many Persons in Authority in Church and State have in so publick and solemn a manner declar'd their high Approbation of, do give Magistrates mighty Advantages for the effectual suppressing of our Debauchery and Impieties, and must, Sir, give you and other Magistrates that have a sense of their Duty in this respect, a great encouragement to be zealous in it.

I shall not, Sir, after I have laid before you your Obligations, and many and great Advantages for your furthering this Noble Work, represent to you how dishonorable it is in its self, and may e'er long appear to the whole Nation, for Magistrates to take solemn Oaths and Trusts upon them to execute Laws, and to be grossly negligent therein, and even to obstruct the Execution of those Laws wherein the Interest of Religion is unquestionably so much concern'd, after they have in their printed Orders assur'd the World they would do the contrary; nor the many and fatal Mischiefs that such unhappy Magistrates bring

* Orders of Sessions that encourage good Christians and good Citizens to give Informations to Magistrates against prophanes and vicious Persons.

Gloucester July 8. 1691.

Middlesex July 9. 1691.

London 1691.

Hereford Oct. 5. 1691.

Buckingham Oct. 8. 1691.

Bodmin 1691.

London 1691.

Middl. 1692.

Middl. 1693.

London 1693.

Middl. 1694.

London 1694.

Gloceft. 1698.

Middl. 1698.

London 1699.

Lincoln 1700.

London 1700.

Salop 1700.

Surry 1700.

Lincoln 1701.

Westminster

Apr. 8. 1702.

Middlesex Apr. 13. 1702.

Surry Apr. 14. 1702.

Southampton

Apr. 14. 1702.

Somerset Apr. bring on Multitudes of particular Persons, and on the
14. 1702. Nation in general, and consequently, what a heavy load
London Apr. 15. of Guilt they do thereby contract, who have no regard
1702. to their Duty in any Instances of it that I have herein
Preston Apr. 16. mention'd, and do thereby evidently obstruct the Reformation
1702. of Manners that is so happily carrying on not only
Manchester Apr. 23. 1702. in these Three Kingdoms, but in other Parts of the
Suffr. Apr. 1702. World; his Majesty by his Proclamations, and our late
Bristol Apr. 1702. Gloucester Apr. 1702. Representatives in Parliament by their Address to him,
having publickly declar'd, That the Debauchery and Pro-
phaneness of the Nation is chiefly owing to the Negligence of
Magistrates in the Execution of their Office, and their ill
Example; which ought to be so dreadful a Consideration
on to all that are concerned in the Charge, that I shall
not offer to aggravate it: I chuse rather to say, that as
any former Remissness of Magistrates, or perhaps Back-
wardness of your Brethren, or of the Magistrates of
your County, can by no means be allowed to be a suf-
ficient Excuse for your neglecting to do what you have
unquestionable Authority, great Advantages, (at this
time more especially) and many Engagements upon you
to do; so in the faithful Discharge of your Duty, you
may render your self a Blessing to your Country, and
to the whole Kingdom; nay, by your zealous Execut-
ion of your Trust and Authority in these matters at this
Juncture, and by the Influence of your good Example,
you may be in some degree instrumental in the reforming
not only of Christendom, but of Mankind; and this
will moreover undoubtedly procure you the Approbation
of your own Conscience, and the Applause of good
Men, and may be a means of your obtaining an ever-
lasting Recompence in the next World. Which is sin-
cerely wish'd by,

S. I. R.

Tonrs.

The Presentment of the Gentlemen of the Grand Jury for
the County of Middlesex, on Monday the 2d. of
June, 1701. to the Court of the King's-Bench.

HIS Majesty by his repeated Proclamations having taken Notice with great Concern, of the open and avowed Practice of Vice and Prophaneness in this Kingdom, to the high Displeasure of Almighty God, and great Scandal of Christianity; and that this hath been occasioned in a great measure by the Neglect of putting in Execution those good Laws which have been made for the Suppressing and Punishing thereof.

And His Majesty having strictly charged and commanded all his Subjects, in their several Places and Stations, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery and effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be guilty of Blasphemy, Profane Swearing and Cursing, excessive Drinking, Debauchery, Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, or other Dissolute, Immoral or Disorderly Practices, as they will answer it to Almighty God, and upon pain of his highest Displeasure:

And we the Grand Inquest of this County, having received an excellent Charge from this Honourable Court, enjoining our Enquiry into the Matters aforesaid; We think our selves obliged to take Notice of the great Advantages which this County has received from the Zeal and Diligence of good Magistrates putting the Laws in Execution against Prophaneness and Debauchery, and likewise of those worthy Gentlemen and Divines, who in this County meet in Societies, for the effectual assisting them therein, and who have been encouraged thereto by the publike approbation of many of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Honorable Judges.

Yet notwithstanding, through the Negligence of Constables, Headboroughs, and other inferior Officers, the Execution of the said Laws is very much obstructed, to the great Pitying of Offenders, and Prejudice of the Publike. We

We do therefore present such of the Constables and Head-boroughs as we have found negligent in the Execution of their Offices.

The Presentment of the Grand Jury for the City of London, at Justice-Hall in the Old-Bailey, the 4th Day of June, 1701. and Ordered by the Court to be Printed.

THIS Honourable Court having taken Notice, in the admirable Charge given to us, of the great Advantages which this City hath received from the Zeal and Industry of those Gentlemen and Citizens, who, in and about this City, are concerned in Societies, for the Promoting more effectually the Execution of the Laws against Prophaneness and Debauchery, in pursuance to His Majesty's Proclamations, and who have received the publick Approbation of many Persons in high Stations in Church and State.

We the Grand Jury of this City, do think it becomes us to return our hearty Thanks to those worthy Persons who are thus engaged in Societies, for the Promoting a Reformation of Manners, so absolutely necessary to our Welfare; and we hope their engaging so heartily in this Noble Design, will be an Encouragement to others to join with them, for the effecting a more general Reformation.

The Presentment of the Grand Jury for the County of Buckingham, at the Assizes held for the said County, 1701.

Being encouraged by His Majesty's Proclamation now read to us, as also by your Lordship's most excellent Charge, we the Grand Jury of the County of Bucks, do think we can do no less than to take notice of the several Societies

sieties erected for the Promoting of a Reformation of Manners ; and particularly we desire to return our hearty Thanks to those worthy Gentlemen and Clergy who meet Monthly at Wendover, in the said County, in order to effect the same. And we hope their appearing in so pious a Design, will animate others to come in and join with them. And this we present as the particular Sentiment of us, whose Names are hereunto Subscribed.

*The Presentment of the Gentlemen of the Grand-Inquest
for the Assizes held at Northampton, for the said
Count, the 3d day of March, 1701.*

When we reflect on the many Blessings we enjoy under His Majesty's auspicious Reign, and pious Care, manifested by repeated Proclamations, to preserve us from Vice and Immoralities, (Enemies that have a very fatal Influence on a Nation and Kingdom) we cannot but think it a suitable Expression of our Gratitude and Duty at this time, to declare our Readiness and Resolution, in our respective Stations to comply with His Majesty's Commands, by endeavouring, that not only such as are guilty of *Prophaning, Swearing and Cursing, Excessive Drinking, Lewdness, and other dissolute Practices*, may be brought to deserved Punishment ; but also that the Negligencies of Constables, Head-boroughs, and other Inferior Officers, and such as keep disorderly publick Houses, wherein the *Lord's-Day* is so frequently Prophaned by unnecessary Resorts thereunto, may be Punished according to Law.

And we take this Occasion to return our hearty Thanks to those worthy Persons who meet in Societies, and have signalized their Zeal by Promoting a more general *Reformation of Manners* in this Kingdom ; a Method approved and recommended by the concurrent Suffrages of many Noble Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Learned Judges, both in this and our Neighbouring Nation.

*The Presentment of the Gentlemen of the Grand Inquest for
the County of Southampton, at the Assizes held at
Winton-Castle, the 4th day of March, 1701.*

Commanded by His Majesty's most excellent Proclamation against Vice, Immorality and Prophaneness, in pursuance of your Lordship's Directions, excited by the Pious Zeal of many worthy Persons engaged in Societies for the Promoting the Glorious Design thereof, encouraged by that visible Success their joint Endeavours have, through God's Blessing, had in many Parts of this Kingdom towards effecting a Reformation of Manners: We take this Opportunity to express our satisfaction thereat, and to profess our readiness to contribute our Assistance for the Advancement of so good a Work, and crave leave to lay before your Lordship and this Honourable Bench, that we conceive the great Obstruction and Impediments hereunto do proceed, not only from the Negligence of Constables and other Officers in their respective Places, but also from the multitude of disorderly Ale-Houses, wherein not only excessive drinking, and other vicious Practices are promoted, but also an Opportunity given to dissolute and profligate Fellows resorting thereto, to entice and allure Young Persons into wicked Confederacies, and Prophanation of the Lord's-Day.

We therefore humbly hope, that all Magistrates, in their respective Stations, will use their utmost Endeavours to discourage and punish such Evil Practices.

*The Presentment of the Grand Jury of the County of
Nottingham, at the Assizes held for the said County,
the 4th day of March, 1701.*

THE Honourable Court having in their Charge to us, expressed the Obligation we lie under, to make diligent Enquiry into the Breach of those Excellent Laws made for the Suppressing

Suppressing of *Immorality* and *Prophaneness*, do think it becomes us, for the Encouragement of all such Persons who have voluntarily form'd themselves into *Societies*, and by their joint Endeavours have made themselves more capable to be instrumental for the *Reformation* of *Manners*, to take notice of their pious Zeal, and also of the visible Success that hath through the Blessing of God, accompanied their Endeavours for obtaining the aforesaid End in many Parts of this Kingdom.

We crave leave to lay before your Lordships and this Honourable Bérich, that we conceive a great Obstruction and Impediment to this most excellent Design, proceeds not only from the neglect of Constables and other Officers in their respective Places, but also from the great Numbers of Disorderly Ale-Houses in this Town, to which many idle and dissolute Persons do frequently resort, and allure others into the like vile Practices and Debaucheries with themselves; which publick Grievance, there have been some Endeavours to redress, that have not yet met with the desired Success.

We therefore humbly beg and hope, That all Magistrates and others, would contribute their utmost Endeavours for the Redress of these Publick Grievances, and for the encouragement of the aforesaid *Societies*, which will animate others that fear the Lord, are faithful Subjects to Her Majesty Queen Anne, (whom God preserve) and true Lovers of their Country, to join with them.

The Presentment of the Grand-Jury for the County of Monmouth, at the General Assizes held at Monmouth, the 26th day of March, 1703.

HE late Majesty's Proclamation against *Immorality* and Vice, back'd by the excellent Charge we receiv'd from your Lordship at this present Juncture, hath obliged us seriously to weigh the several Inconveniences that follow our too tender putting in Practice those wholesome Laws injoin'd

by